

appreciation for a variety of perspectives and all that we share as Washingtonians and Americans.

This year also marks the 15th anniversary of one of Humanities Washington's signature events: Bedtime Stories. Bedtime Stories is an annual literary celebration featuring critically acclaimed Northwest writers unveiling new short stories created specifically for dinner galas in Spokane and Seattle. National Book Award Winner Charles Johnson has called it "the region's premier literary event." Johnson is one of the founders of the gala, and will receive the 2013 Humanities Washington Award at Bedtime Stories in Seattle on October 4.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to convey my congratulations to Humanities Washington for 40 years of excellent, necessary work sharing the humanities with Washingtonians. I salute Humanities Washington as it works to ensure that the humanities are key to civic life for generations to come.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM—
CONGRESSIONAL PRAYER CAUCUS

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2013

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about one of our Nation's most coveted rights. The freedom of religion granted to all Americans by the First Amendment. Our Founders knew this was one of the freedoms worth fighting for.

In 1775 the Continental Congress under the advisement of General Washington created the chaplaincy. They knew the war ahead would not only try every Soldier physically, but also spiritually. They knew these Soldiers would need guidance, sound advice, and a helping hand to discharge their duties.

Many times throughout the early beginnings of this nation the Congress has come together to reaffirm the importance of the Chaplaincy. In 1791 the Congress empowered the President to employ a chaplain. Since then the chaplaincy has been an intricate part of our Nation's service men and women. The task of these chaplains has long been to facilitate the religious and spiritual needs of the Armed Services.

Recently members of the House of Representatives repelled an attack on the Chaplain Corps, led by senior leaders in the Pentagon. Leaders in the Pentagon attempted to circumvent current DoD regulations by allowing Atheist Chaplains to serve in the military. Such a policy destroys the historical intent of the Corps, and its current ability to address service member's spiritual needs. Pentagon leadership has no right to bypass DoD regulations as it deems fit.

This episode brings to mind a quote I heard from an Army Soldier, "A Service member's faith is not a weapon but a shield." It is no secret that many people going to war encounter some type of religious conversion. Those already observing a religion attribute their successful return from combat to their deity. Why put someone's religious guidance in the hands of a counselor with indifferent feeling towards a belief system.

A chaplain's duty puts him in the foxhole, the cockpit, or at sea. I listen to a service

member's deepest fears and often present when they celebrate their highest moments. In both, their handling of the situation is dictated by faith. Congress needs to adhere to a new battle cry; faith under fire is faith worth fighting for.

I stand today with many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to remind Congress of the free exercise clause in the constitution that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion prohibiting the exercise thereof."

COMMEMORATING THE 230TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY OF PARIS

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2013

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize September 3, 2013, as the 230th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Paris. The Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783, thus ending American Revolutionary War and declaring the "United States to be free, sovereign and independent states." The Continental Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris on January 14, 1784.

I am proud to represent Virginia's First District, frequently referred to as "America's First District," which is home to Yorktown where the Revolutionary War ended on October 19, 1781. With the help of our French allies, the decisive Battle of Yorktown resulted in the surrender of the British Army commanded by British lord and Lieutenant General Lord Cornwallis.

A resolution of the Continental Congress, dated October 29, 1781, called for a "Yorktown Monument to the Alliance and Victory". The Senate Committee on Military Affairs in its report dated March 16, 1880, stated that "the surrender at Yorktown was the crowning success of the revolution, and its event should be commemorated by national authority." The grounds were secured and the cornerstone laid on October 18, 1881. Today, the Yorktown Battlefield, site of the last major battle of the American Revolutionary War, is administered by the National Park Service and is part of Colonial National Historical Park.

Virginia's First District has a rich history of military service, beginning with the Revolutionary War and continuing today. I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating the 230th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Paris and recognizing the significance of the Battle of Yorktown.

IN HONOR OF AZEM HAJDARI:
LEADER OF ALBANIA'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 10, 2013

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Azem Hajdari, an Albanian democratic leader and parliamentarian who was assassinated in 1998. Today, September 12, marks the 15th anniversary of his tragic death.

Born in 1963 into a working class family, Azem Hajdari grew up in Albania's mountainous northern region of Bajram Curr. While he was a student in Tirana, Albania's capital, the collapse of the Soviet Union led to increased popular unrest in the communist states in Central and Eastern Europe. In Albania, thousands took to foreign embassies in an effort to escape the country. As political and social tensions continued to escalate, in December 1990, students began protests against their worsening living conditions.

Azem Hajdari was committed to democratic change in Albania and quickly emerged as a leader of the student movement. The student demonstrations helped to precipitate the fall of the regime, and Azem then became one of the founders of the Democratic Party, the first non-Communist political party in Albania since the Second World War. He became the Democratic Party's first chairman and was elected in 1991 to the Albanian parliament, where he championed democratic reforms.

In 1997, Azem was shot inside the Albanian parliament and severely injured, yet he refused to be intimidated. He persisted in his mission to build democracy in Albania despite several additional attempts on his life. However, on September 12, 1998, Azem was murdered as he stepped out of his party's offices in Tirana.

Azem Hajdari's death shocked the nation and he was posthumously recognized as a martyr for democracy. Through his words and actions, he taught the people of Albania that freedom is not given—it must be won, through struggle, determination, and faith.

During the conflict in Kosova, Azem also supported the Kosova Freedom and Independence Movement. He was a close friend of Kosova's President Ibrahim Rugova and dedicated significant time and energy to the Kosovar cause.

Today, Albania has made great strides. It has a vibrant political system and is a member of NATO, and Albanians are able to travel freely throughout Europe. Kosova also is a free and independent country, aspiring to join the European Union. Both Albania and Kosova are building strong democracies, just as Azem dreamed.

Azem Hajdari has received many awards after his death, including Albania's "Order of the Flag" on what would have been his 50th birthday earlier this year, the "Honor of the Nation" award, and the "Gjergj Katriot Skenderbeu" ("Skanderbeg's Order"), which was conferred by Albanian President Bujar Nishani and former presidents Alfred Moisiu and Bamir Topi.

On the 15th anniversary of Azem Hajdari's untimely death, the Albanian people will once more honor a truly historic leader of Albania's democratic movement. On this day, September 12, Albanians from across the country and from around the world, including Albanian Kosovars, will gather to remember Azem and escort him to his final resting place in Tirana's Martyr's Cemetery.

Mr. Speaker, Azem Hajdari was a stalwart champion of democratic values and hero to many Albanians. I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in recognizing Azem Hajdari for his historic contributions to building democracy in Albania.